

Bush tucker species

Those with an ~ can be established on fairly exposed sites. Others require some shelter.

Fruits

~ *Acmena smithii* (Lilly Pilly) A medium tree with edible fruit. Hardy in a wide range of situations but prefers a protected, semi shaded spot where it can grow up to 15 meters. The bountiful fruit can be eaten raw but also makes a delicious jam. Riverdene Nursery

Acronychia oblongifolia (Lemon Aspen) A small bushy rainforest tree with edible fruit. Has a citrus flavour, but its aromatic oils make it very different from traditional citrus fruits. Only a small amount is needed for your cooking, such as cakes, to benefit from its flavour. Riverdene Nursery

~ *Austromyrtus dulcis* (Midjinberry or Midyim) A small scrambling shrub usually growing in sandy soil but seemingly very adaptable. Round, blue-grey spotted fruits to 10 mm which were gathered and eaten fresh by the aboriginal peoples. Pleasant, slightly aromatic taste.

Billardiera scandens (Apple Berry) A twining vine with green, fleshy fruits containing many seeds in a sweet pulp. Native to coastal heaths and open forests. Tending to scramble among shrubs and grasses growing nearby though not vigorous. Hardy in a range of soils and climates from full to semi shade. Can be trained on a trellis. The flowers attract honey-eating birds. Ripe fruits have a flavour similar to 'stewed apples' or 'kiwi fruits.' Hunter Valley Native Nursery

~ *Carpobrotus rossii* (Pig Face) A succulent ground cover with delicious fruit that can be eaten raw. Widespread in coastal areas of southern Australia but very hardy in a range of situations. Propagated easily from cuttings. Trees in Newcastle

Cissus antarctica (Kangaroo Grape) A vigorous climbing vine with edible black berries. Can be dominating if left to its own devices. Needs a strong canopy and under story and a shaded, moist position. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Cissus hypoglauca (Water Vine) A less vigorous vine than *C. antarctica* and very dissimilar. Climbing, with edible blue black berries and five leaflets to each leaf. Prefers sheltered, moist shady position. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Davidsonia pruriens (Davidson Plum or Ooray) A small, narrow, rainforest tree up to 10m with 50 mm long plum-like fruits. The variety native to Far North Queensland is the best and can be grown successfully in NSW as well as further south. It doesn't like frost or having wet feet and prefers an easterly aspect. Distinctive, hairy, foliage is usually bright pink when new. The leaves are divided into leaflets (pinnate) and may be up to 800 mm long. Fruits that make excellent jams and a full-flavoured, dry red wine. Plants will grow well in full to part sun and rich soil.

Dianella caerulea (Flax Lilly) A small, upright herb with bright blue-purple fruits. Beautiful flowers. Native to coastal heath and forest but hardy in a range of well drained soils. Hunter Valley Native Plants. Gingarra Native Nursery

Diospyros australis (Black Plum) A small tree with shiny black fruits up to 20mm in diameter. Native to rainforest so prefers a protected, moist and shaded spot with rich soil. Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project

Diploglottis cunninghamii (Native Tamarind) A tall rainforest tree with edible fruit. Used for jams and drinks or in Asian cuisine as with exotic tamarind. Prefers rich soil and a moist sheltered position. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Eupomatia laurina (Bolwarra) A small tree or shrub with unusual flowers and oval fruit that grow to about 2cm diameter. It is native to rainforest margins so prefers a site with some shelter and a rich moist soil. Riverdene Nursery

Eustrephus latifolius (Wombat Berry) A small climbing vine with edible fruit and tubers. Climbs up to several meters high but does not dominate. Bright orange fruits said to be very good. Prefers shaded, moist site. Hunter Valley Native Nursery

Ficus coronata (Sandpaper Fig) A small canopy shaped tree with edible fruits that vary markedly in flavour. The leaves were used by the Aboriginal peoples as sandpaper. Native to creek lines, it enjoys moist, semi shaded conditions. Trees in Newcastle. Riverdene

Geitenoplesium cymosum (Scrambling Lilly) A small, scrambling vine that may climb to several meters high and has blue-black edible fruit. Prefers a shaded moist position. Riverdene Nursery

Guilfoylia monostylis (Native Plum) A rainforest tree with edible fruit. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Microcitrus australasica (Finger Lime) A small tree up to 4-6m in height that takes from 5-17 years to bear fruit. It prefer a free-draining soil in well protected full sun or part shade. Remove flowers and fruit in Years 1 and 2, to encourage tree growth and give plenty of water during growth flush, flowering and fruit set. Moderately drought and frost tolerant. Skin of the fruit ripens from purple to green, yellow, red or black and the mature pulp colours are either green, yellow or pink. It is used in the same was as lime and goes well with ginger, chilli and coriander and other bushfoods, such as riberies, native pepper and lemon myrtle.

Passiflora herbertiana (Native Passion Fruit) A climbing vine with passion fruits that are slightly drier than exotic types. Prefers fertile soil and a sheltered, sunny position. Kooragang Wetlands Rehabilitation

Planchonella australis (Black Apple) A large tree up to 20m which is native to drier rainforests of the Illawarra, Manning River in NSW to north-east Queensland. The fruit is purple-black, like a large plum, and up to 5cm diameter with a flavour said to be a little like custard apple. The soft, purple pulp is used in jams and desserts. Only reaches fruit-bearing age after at least 10 years. Fruit production from mature trees is large, especially in moist, fertile soils. Trees in Newcastle

~ *Podocarpus elatus* (Plum Pine) Plum Pine sauce can be found on menus around Australia as an accompaniment to meat dishes. It is a rainforest tree that adapts well to a wide range of conditions, but reasonable soil and ample moisture are necessary for optimum fruiting. Trees are male or female and a mix is needed for good fruit production. Riverdene Nursery

Rhodomyrtus psidioides (Native Guava) A tree with edible fruit. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery, Kooragang

Rubus hillii (Broad Leaf Bramble) A small prickly scrambling shrub with heart shaped leaves and edible raspberry fruits. Tea of the leaves relieves stomach upsets. Prefers sunny but sheltered sites with reasonably fertile soil. Hunter Valley Native Plants

Rubus parvifolius (Native Raspberry, Small Leaf Bramble) A small scrambling prickly shrub with clusters of succulent fruits. Fruit varies immensely in quality but when it's good, it's very, very good. Prefers damp, often clay soils with some shade.

Rubus rosifolius (Forest Bramble) Not as pretty as the other raspberry species but is hardy in just about any moist soil. Fruits are large, but less flavorsome than those of *R. parvifolius*. Native to moist Eucalypt forests and rainforest margins.

~ *Sambucus australasica* (Yellow Elderberry) A small tree/tall shrub with yellow, fleshy berries. Prefers a sheltered but sunny position as it is native to rainforest margins. Kooragang Wetlands Rehabilitation Project

Schizomeria ovata (Crab Apple) A tall rainforest tree resembling Coachwood. Fruits are apple shaped and about 12mm in diameter. Prefers a shady, sheltered position with rich moist soil as it is usually found along gully lines.

~ *Syzygium australe* (Brush Cherry) A small rainforest tree growing to 8 meters. Prefers richer soils in protected areas as it is usually found along gully lines. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

~ *Syzygium leumanii* (Riberry, Small-leafed Lilly Pilly, Cherry Satinash) A beautiful and commonly grown rainforest tree with new growth changing through several colours. Produces masses of pear-shaped pink berries that have a clove flavouring and can be used for making jam, tarts, sauces, and cakes or blended for use in icecream. Will grow prostrate if struck from a cutting, giving a hedge effect, while seedling varieties will give lots of shade as they grow high and broad. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

~ *Syzygium paniculatum* (Magenta Cherry, Lilly Pilly) A small decorative tree with delicious fruit that grows naturally from temperate areas to the subtropics. Prefers a rich soil (ie lots of nutritious mulch) Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Vegetables (edible leaves and tubers)

Anthropodium sp. (Vanilla Lilly) Branching, slender herbs up to 50cm with edible tubers and pretty flowers. Prefers a damp but sunny site. Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project

Apium prostratum (Sea Celery) An edible herb related to celery that is used in soups, salads etc. Widely distributed in coastal areas. Has a fairly celery-like taste. Prefers a damp, sunny position with sandy soil and will tolerate heavy frosts.

Caesia sp. (Grass Lilly) Upright herbs with edible tubers. *C. vittata* has beautiful purple and white flowers. Native to grassland and woodland so prefers sunny but sheltered site. Gingarra Native Nursery

Commelina cyanea ~ (Scurvy Weed) A creeping groundcover with edible leaves that are eaten cooked. Hardy and easy to propagate from cutting. Can be invasive but is dominated by its close relative Wandering Jew. Likes damp, shady areas. Trees in Newcastle

Dioscorea transversa (Native Yam) A slender scrambling climber native to rain forest and moister woodland. Edible tubers and distinctive, golden shiny seed pods (useful for art lessons). Riverdene Nursery

~ *Elatostema reticulatum* (Bush Spinach) A small herb whose edible leaves are eaten cooked. Grows naturally in rocky rainforest areas besides streams.

~ *Hibiscus heterophyllus* (Native Rosella) A small, hardy pioneer tree with edible leaves and flowers. Fiber used to make ropes etc. Leaves have very high vitamin C content and a great taste. Exceptionally beautiful flowers. Native to rainforest margins so prefers a damp, sunny but sheltered site. Trees in Newcastle

Thysanotus tuberosus (Common Fringe Lilly) An erect herb up to 40cm with edible tubers and beautiful purple flowers. Prefers a drier, sunny and well draining site. Gingarra Native Nursery

Tetragonia tetragonoides (Warrigal Greens) An edible herb used and tasting a bit like spinach. Easily propagated. However, caution must be taken. Like some other edible plants, Warrigal Greens have a high oxalate concentration. Only leaves and young stems should be eaten and these both should be blanched for 3 minutes to remove soluble oxalates, and the water discarded. Seed available from the Wilderness Society

Herbs and Spices

Alpinia caerulea (Native Ginger) A tall herb with edible fruit and rhizome. Much like ginger. Grows best in warm moist position in good soil. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Backhousia anisata (Anise Myrtle) A small tree with beautiful, ornamental foliage. Used for an aniseed flavour. Likes rich soil with good 'anchor water' and can be grown as far south as Victoria.

Backhousia citriodora (Lemon Myrtle) A small tree up to about 8m with dark green lemon-scented leaves. It flowers prolifically with large bunches of small white flowers on the ends of the branches. Excellent lemon oil content. The essential ingredient 'Citral' accounts for over 90% of the plant's essential oil, compared to about 3% in lemon oil. Oil is extracted by steam distillation. Leaves are used fresh or dried and ground with baked fish, to make a lemon tea, breads and cakes, chicken and rice dishes. Native to Queensland but can be grown as far south as Victoria.

Mentha diemenica (Slender Mint) A perennial leaf herb, use as pepper/spearmint.

Ocimum americanum (Wild Basil) A perennial leaf herb, use as basil.

Prostanthera incisa (Cut leaf mint) A hardy shrub to 1.8 metres. Beautiful leaves and mauve flowers. Grow naturally on well-watered creek edges and in sheltered forest. Use as pepper/spearmint.

Solanum centrale (Bush Tomato) Dried fruit has spice/condiment uses. Small shrub.

Smilax glycyphylla, (Native sarsaparilla) A scrambling vine whose leaves can be made into a 'sweet tea.' Prefers a sheltered site but is also found in open, less protected sites.

~ *Tasmannia lanceolata* (Mountain Pepper) A shrub up to 4m with edible leaves and purple black fruits that can be eaten fresh or dried. Native to cool mountain areas of Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales. Prefers a protected, semi-shaded spot with plenty of water. The fruits have been said to be superior to regular pepper and to have much more kick. Fruit only in the company of another of the species, as there are separate male and female plants. Slow to establish. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Viola hederacea (Native Violet) A small creeping groundcover with edible flowers. Prefers moist shaded position. Trees in Newcastle

Wahlenbergia spp. (Bluebells) Groundcovers with edible flowers. Gingarra Native Plant Nursery

Edible Sap

~ *Acacia decurrans* (Green Wattle) A small tree with sweet edible sap that has bipinnate leaves and bright yellow globular blossoms. Quick growing, nitrogen fixer. Prefers shale soils and open sunny sites. Hunter Valley Native Plants

Edible Flowers

~ *Acacia floribunda* (Sally Wattle) A 'graceful' small tree with edible flowers. It is a common garden plant due to the abundance of flowers. Quick growing, nitrogen fixer. Grows naturally on sheltered slopes and creek banks but is hardy in a wide range of situations. Hunter Valley Native Plants

Medicinal

~ *Melaleuca hypericifolium* A small spreading shrub with sweet nectarous blossoms that attract birds and can be used to make a sweet, cool drink. Leaves chewed for headaches and colds. Prefers moist sites but will adapt to a range of situations. Riverdene Nursery

Edible Nuts and Seeds

~ *Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood) A usually medium tree that can grow to 30 meters in favourable conditions. Its timber is highly prized and it has edible seeds that can be ground and added to biscuits, cakes etc. Prefers a sheltered site on moist and fairly rich soil. Quick growing, nitrogen fixer. Easily propagated

~ *Brachychiton acerifolius* (Illawarra Flame Tree) A large tree with edible seeds: a 'nut of highest quality when roasted.' Can be roasted and ground as a coffee substitute. Commonly grown as a street tree and in garden situation. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Brachychiton populneum (Kurrajong) A large tree with edible seeds that are hulled and eaten raw or roasted as a nut. Deeply roasted and ground they make an excellent coffee substitute. The inner bark was an important source of fiber for Aboriginal peoples. Grows well in a range of shelter situation. Trees in Newcastle

~ *Lomandra longifolia* (Spiky Headed Mat Rush) A sedge to 1m tall with edible leaf bases and seeds. Very adaptable to a range of situations. Seeds can be ground into a flour or paste and the tender base of the stem is good in stir-fries etc. Easily propagated and an excellent bush regeneration plant as it grows very quickly.

~ *Macadamia integrifolia* (Macadamia Nut) A medium canopy shaped tree with delicious edible seed. Can grow well in exposed sunny positions. Native to northern areas. Dingo Creek R.F. Nursery

Bird attractants (Natural pest control)

~ *Callistemon salignus* (Willow Bottlebrush) A beautiful tall shrub or small tree with papery bark and nectarous yellow blossoms that can be used to make a sweet drink. Lovely pink tips of new growth in Spring. Prefers a sheltered moist site. Riverdene Nursery

~ *Callistemon viminalis* A tall, narrow tree known for its graceful "weeping" appearance and bushy, red flowers. Common as a feature plant. Prefers a moist sheltered spot where its brittle branches are protected from the wind. Riverdene Nursery

~ *Melaleuca linariifolia* (Snow in Summer) A small tree to 8 meters with papery bark. Feathery, nectarous white blossoms cover the tree and can be used to make a sweet cool drink. Prefers a moist site on clay or shale soils. Riverdene Nursery

~ *Melaleuca nodosa* A small stiff shrub with yellow, nectarous blossoms that can be used to make a sweet cool drink. Common in various habitats from coastal heath to scrub land. Prefers a sunny site. Riverdene Nursery.

~ *Melaleuca stypheloides* (Prickly-leaved Paper-bark) A medium tree with nectarous white blossoms that can be used to make a sweet drink. Good shade tree. Prefers a sheltered moist site but is very adaptable. Riverdene Nursery

Information sourced from various Internet sites and Alan Fairley and Philip Moores's *Native Plants of the Sydney District*. Many thanks to Paul Melahan of Greening Australia for his assistance.

